

**Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Data**  
**Public Hearing, July 9, 2007 -- "Economics and Organization of Bibliographic Data"**

**PCC and Large Research Library Perspective**

*Michael D. Charbonneau*  
*Director of Technical Services & Head, Cataloging Division*  
*Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington*

---

**PCC Perspective**

In August 1996, Winston Tabb, then Associate Librarian, Library of Congress, while speaking at the IFLA Conference held in Beijing, noted that as North American libraries were in the process of responding to a new reality of tighter budgets "... cataloging was among the first activities to become a target for potential savings, because of the high labor costs it has traditionally entailed."<sup>1</sup> He stated that the Library of Congress, in direct response to its own declining budget situation, had joined forces with other libraries to develop a strategy to deal with the "crisis in cataloging." The strategy he was referring to was the 1995 formulation of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC).

The Program for Cooperative Cataloging is an international coalition coordinated jointly by the Library of Congress and PCC participants around the world. The PCC membership represents a major stakeholder in the area of bibliographic data - both as providers and as users. The PCC has realized numerous accomplishments over the years due to the voluntary cooperation of member libraries and organizations that range from small to very large institutions. The PCC's core mission is to provide affordable, authoritative, timely, and quality cataloging based on mutually agreed upon standards.

There are four component programs under the PCC umbrella: BIBCO (the monographic record program with 47 members), CONSER (the cooperative online serials program with 51 members), NACO (the name authority program with over 400 members), and SACO (the subject authority program with over 100 members). In recent years, the two PCC authority programs, NACO and SACO, represent the largest and fastest growing program areas, particularly at the international level.

The June 1<sup>st</sup> implementation of the CONSER standard record is a recent PCC achievement that serves to demonstrate the effectiveness of collective effort when attempting to simplify the creation of bibliographic data.

The purpose of this new record standard is twofold:

---

<sup>1</sup> Tabb, Winston. "The Program for Cooperative Cataloging: Mission, Goals, and Potential for International Cooperation," <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/archive/tabbpaper.html>

- 1.) To create a single standard record that will reduce serials cataloging costs by emphasizing access points over detailed, and often redundant, descriptive information.
- 2.) To take a more user-centered approach by only requiring those bibliographic elements necessary to support the needs of the information seeker.

It is our expectation that the new standard will realize a saving of 20-25% of cataloger time needed to create serial records and that this will be accomplished without compromising bibliographic quality.

Records bearing the PCC “seal of approval” are regarded by the majority of MARC record consumers as the equivalent to those produced by LC catalogers – that is to say, they are trustworthy and authoritative. PCC records can be accepted without the need for further modification or cataloger intervention and are, therefore, cost-effective.

In order to better understand the economic value of the PCC’s cooperative approach towards sharing in the creation of bibliographic and authority data, I would like to highlight just a few of this year’s Program statistics (current as of April 2007):

- BIBCO contributions comprised 32% of the combined total of PCC/LC original monograph record output
- CONSER contributions (total number of authentications):  
PCC: 45%  
LC: 55%
- New name authority records created: ~164,000  
PCC: 66%  
LC: 34%
- New series authority records created by PCC participants: ~5,800

This represents a decrease of 1.76% in the number of new series authority records created during the same time period last year.

- New subject authority records: ~3,100  
PCC: 62%  
LC: 38%

What these numbers showcase is an important gradual shift in the world of bibliographic data creation. Program records have gone a long way in assisting those in our profession who suffer from LCRDD – Library of Congress Record Dependency Disorder. Thanks to the collective output of PCC members, the library community as a whole has benefited.

## The Future of the PCC

While the PCC is renowned for its work in the cooperative MARC record cataloging arena, the Program recognizes that we must re-position ourselves to respond to the changes in today's information landscape. The PCC leadership has invested a significant amount of effort developing a new mission statement<sup>2</sup> and five-year strategic plan<sup>3</sup> designed to help guide the future directions of the organization. The two-year planning process has resulted in five strategic directions and a number of associated goals, objectives, and action items. In order to respond to the fundamental challenges we believe will be facing the future of the PCC and the cataloging profession, I would like to highlight a few of the Program's strategic goals that are particularly relevant to today's topic concerning the economics of bibliographic data.

- Expand and incorporate new models of cooperation that includes non-MARC metadata
- Work towards increasing the organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to a changing environment by being proactive rather than reactive
- Create a culture of flexibility and agility in perceiving challenges and making use of opportunities
- Address new trends in the web environment and publishing industry by capitalizing on the economic advantages of cooperation
- Build on and expand partnerships and collaborations by increasing and diversifying membership in the PCC
- Develop close working relationships with publishing entities to promote arrangements for repurposing publisher created metadata and increasing data sharing
- Support efforts to derive cataloging records created according to standards established by other communities via cooperative metadata projects and activities
- Continue to pursue globalization
- Internationalize authority files

This last goal has long been on the PCC "wish list" for quite some time. In today's developing global network, we know that expanding our authority files on a worldwide scale is an absolute necessity. We are in the process of appointing a task group to recommend a new model for international participation, based on the NACO model, that will lead to the possibility of other regional or national authority files being linked in some fashion via a Virtual International Authority File (VIAF) system.

The Program for Cooperative Cataloging is an outstanding example of how the cataloging profession has been able to successfully leverage, at the collective level,

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/MissionStatement.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/draftstratdir.html>

efforts aimed at improving and streamlining traditional bibliographic control operations. Key to the PCC's success has been the Library of Congress' leadership – a role that I hope will continue. As the largest cooperative cataloging organization in the world, our members have demonstrated how practitioners can combine forces to effect change and to realize economic savings beyond what we, as individuals, could possibly accomplish. Reducing the cataloging burden on the local scale through collective efforts on a global scale has resulted in clear economic advantages in the area of bibliographic data.

### **Large Research Library Perspective**

How to optimize the allocation of staff and monetary resources in support of bibliographic control has been a central theme in large research libraries since the days of card catalogs. Even with the more recent advances in technology, libraries continue to seek more viable alternatives for creating, maintaining, and obtaining bibliographic data in order to reduce the duplication of intellectual effort at the local level. Cataloging operations within large research libraries routinely seek ways to optimize internal efficiencies by streamlining workflows, automating at every opportunity, and relying more and more on vendor-supplied services and outside sources for bibliographic data.

However, we need to move beyond simply attempting to optimize internal productivity efficiencies and look for new ways of doing things by:

- Innovating everywhere – but not try to make it perfect
- Focusing on the user's needs – start with the customer and work backwards
- Taking advantage of existing standards by redesigning them to meet the needs of our users
- Making our metadata accessible on the Web
- Freeing up catalogers so they can focus on areas where their expertise can deliver the most value
- Investing in training and professional development opportunities in order to better prepare our catalogers to meet tomorrow's challenges

The future of bibliographic data will involve experimentation, exploration, simplification, diversification, collaboration, and above all, cooperation.